

Saturday, May 20, 1871.

Subject: The Two Revelations.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

I. The Duty of Using One's Life for Others. II. The God of Comfort. III. The Nobility of Conversion. IV. Self-Control Possible to All. V. Pilate, and his Modern Imitators. VI. The Strong to Bear with the Weak. VII. Growth in the Knowledge of God. VIII. Contentment in all Things. IX. Abhorrence of Evil. X. Privileges of the Christian. XI. The Love of Money. XII. Divine Influence on the Human Soul. XIII. Moral Affinity, the True Ground of Unity. XIV. The Value of Deep Feelings. XV. Works Meet for Repentance. XVI. Malign Spiritual Influences. XVII. The Old and the New. XVIII. The Hidden Christ. XIX. Well-Wishing not Well-Doing. XX. Sphere of the Christian Minister. XXI. Suffering, the Measure of Worth. XXII. The Victory of Hope in Sorrow. XXIII. The Crime of Degrading Men. XXIV. Self-Conceit in Morals. XXV. Morality, the Basis of Piety. XXVI. The Trinity. XXVII. The Family, as an American Institution.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

I. The Way of Coming to Christ. II. Conduct, the Index of Feeling. III. The Sympathy of Christ. IV. Retribution and Reformation. V. Counting the Cost. VI. Scope and Function of a Christian Life. VII. Human Ideas of God. VIII. The Graciousness of Christ. IX. Evils of Anxious Forethought. X. The Beauty of Moral Qualities. XI. The Problem of Joy and Suffering in Life. XII. The Apostolic Theory of Preaching. XIII. The Right and the Wrong Way of Giving Pleasure. XIV. The Perfect Manhood. XV. Dissimulating Love. XVI. The Door. XVII. Moral Theory of Civil Liberty. XVIII. Peaceableness. XIX. Soul-Drifting. XX. The Hidden Life. XXI. Discouragements and Comforts in Christian Life. XXII. Hindrances to Christian Development. XXIII. Loving and Hating. XXIV. Authority of Right over Wrong. XXV. The Power of Love. XXVI. The Preciousness of Christ.

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

I. Watchfulness. II. Paul and Demetrius. III. Consolations of the Suffering of Christ. IV. Treasure that Cannot be Stolen. V. Bearing, but not Overborne. VI. The Holy Spirit. VII. Ideal Standard of Duty. VIII. Faults. IX. The Comforting God. X. The Name Above Every Name. XI. National Unity. XII. Social Obstacles to Religion. XIII. Christ, the Deliverer. XIV. The God of Pity. XV. Sin Against the Holy Ghost. XVI. Inheritance of the Meek. XVII. Memorials of Divine Mercy. XVIII. The Victorious Power of Faith. XIX. The Peace of God. XX. Coming to One's Self. XXI. Fragments of Instruction. XXII. The Substance of Christianity. XXIII. Spiritual Blindness. XXIV. Perfect Peace. XXV. Preparation for Death. XXVI. Fidelity to Conviction.

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THE TWO REVELATIONS.

“ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” Rom. II., 14-16.

The “ law ” here spoken of was the Mosaic law, unquestionably. To the Jews the term *law* conveyed about the same meaning which to us the word *Bible* does. It was their Book; or, it presented itself to their mind as the inscribed and recorded sum of their religious faith and observances, just as the Bible stands before us as the Book of our faith, and the Guide and Directory of our lives and dispositions.

The apostle argues that the law—that is, the Jewish Bible—existed, in regard to its essential elements, outside of itself, if I may so express it; that the great truths which it embodied did not exist for the first time in the Old Testament Scripture, and were not created for it, but that they were founded in nature—so much so that when men had no access to the law, they went on (the better portion, the more intelligent and enlightened, of them), seeking after the very same ends, in the path of the very same truths that the Jew did by his Scripture. And the teaching of the apostle is, that although the light was paler, and the path more obscure, it was the substantially same path and the same light, after all.

The Gentiles—that is, the great nations of the world outside of Jewry—were also seeking for truth; for honor; for justice; for fidelity; for reformations from evil; for higher spiritual development; for more insight. They were men full of noble aspirations. north of them, east of them, north-east of them, all the way along the Mediterranean coast, there were men of great mental stature and high genius, and not deficient in moral sentiments, all seeking, though blindly, or rather in a twilight, the same great ends.

Now, the apostle says,

“ When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things

contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another [their moral consciousness condemning them or approving them.]'

And thus he identifies the subject-matter of the Old Testament Scripture with the truths which God has revealed in nature.

In other words, the truths of the Old Testament belong to the nature of things. They are organic. They are fundamental. If you go through the Bible you shall find them there ; and if you go down to the bottom of things you shall find them there. They are a part of the constitution of nature. They are not found in nature because the Bible put them there ; but they are found in the Bible because they were in nature first.

This was certainly the method by which our Master taught. The union of two striking peculiarities was found in the Saviour. One was a quiet compliance with the whole custom and worship of his time. He was a thorough Jew in his religious habits. He kept Jewish days. He observed the Jewish ceremonies. He frequented the temple. He was devout. He recognized the festivals. He worshiped in the synagogue. We find him continually taking part in the synagogue worship. And we do not find that, by word or deed, he set aside any part of the national worship. Yet you shall not find an instance in which he intensified or ratified truth by reference to custom, or by founding it at all on precedent. On the other hand, the appeal of Christ was always to reason, and to that part of reason which we call *moral consciousness*. He based his instruction, not upon the venerableness of precedent, nor upon the claims of antiquity, nor upon the wisdom of observing the customs which had been prevalent, nor even upon the commands of Scripture ; but upon this : **IT IS TRUE, AND THEREFORE IT IS RIGHT.** He urged men from considerations that went back of external revelation, and beneath it ; that went to the sources from which revelation itself sprang. And it may be said that all the great truths of the Word of God are true whether the Bible is believed in or not. But more of that further on.

It will be found, therefore, that the foundation principles of Christianity rest in the nature of things. Christianity is not only not in antagonism to nature (cursed be he that makes it seem so), but is coincident with it. It is not in antagonism, in any of its parts, with nature. It is not, either, a super-addition to nature. Christianity is nature itself, and the best part of it—that part which relates to man's soul ; that part which takes cognizance of the morality and the divine element in man. Christianity does not undertake to

help nature in the organization of the globe, nor in its moral laws, nor in its political economy, nor in ten thousand elements which are of transcendent importance. Christianity appropriates to itself simply the province of the divine and spiritual elements that are in man; and in respect to them, Christianity is a part of nature. Not only is Christianity not in conflict with nature, not only is it not an artificial thing which stands above nature, but it is an interpretation of that which is everlastingly true.

The great Bible truths, then, were not made by the Bible. They were not invented, they were not gotten up, for the sake of making a Bible. The principles of religion as taught in the Old Testament and in the New Testament were not framed and put together for the sake of making the canonical books. The Bible is an exposition of one side of nature: that is to say, the moral side of man's relation to God, to his fellow-men, and to his own destiny, here and hereafter. It is constructed out of the experiences of the best men, in their respective ages of the world. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God; but they spoke about their experiences —about their trials, and the results of their trials; about their thoughts, and the results of their thinkings. God revealed truth to the world through the lives of men who formulated in their own minds great moral problems, and identified themselves therewith. And the results they were inspired to record and to teach. But if the Scripture were disowned, or if it were thrown away, it would not change the truth a whit—though your competency to find it out might be changed.

If a man in the night, by the light of a lamp, is trying to make out his chart, and there is storm in the heaven, and storm upon the sea, and some one knocks that lamp out of his hand, what is done? The storm is above, and the storm is below; and the chart lies dark, so that he cannot find it out—that is all. If it were daylight he could see the chart well enough; but there being no light, and the lamp on which he depended for light being knocked out of his hand, he cannot avail himself of that which is before him.

And the same is true concerning much of the Bible. It is an interpreter. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. And those truths which have their exposition in the Bible, and which are a revelation of the structure of the world, and of the divine nature and government, do not depend for their truth upon the Bible itself. They are only interpreted and made plain by it. If the world disbelieved Scripture, they would simply deprive themselves of moral eyesight. It would not change the great truths of God any more than the burning of all the scientific books in the world would

change the great physical laws—which science expounds, but does not create. Science does not depend on books—it is founded in the nature of things. Books are the means by which it is brought to our knowledge.

So, truth does not depend on the Bible. The Bible does not create it: but merely expounds it, brings it into practical shapes, and makes it usable to men. And such is the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, that if you should burn every Bible on the globe, though much knowledge of truth would be quenched, yet the world would not lose a single truth. For truths are organic. They spring from the way in which you and I are made, and are bred together in life. They belong to the nature of things. They were as true ages ago as they are now, though they were not then as available to men as they are now. And the truths contained in this guide, this directory, this exposition of moral truth, this Bible, can be found outside of it, either in principle or in fact. One of the best ways of studying the Word of God, is to compare it with the things of which it speaks. If we read in the Word of God of *rivers*, of *fruitful trees*, of *mountains*, of *cedars of Lebanon*, of the *oak*, of the *lily of the valley*, or of other things like these, we recognize at once the propriety of identifying and studying them outside of the Bible, and not inside of it. If it speaks of a *lion*, or a *behemoth*, or a *serpent*, we go to natural history to find out what these names mean. We study the nature of these animals; and then we go back to understand Scripture.

And now, if we go to the Word of God, and it speaks of man, and of his dispositions, his will, his choices, his tendencies, his character, the results of certain influences which are brought to bear upon him, we are then to go to nature itself, just as we do in these other cases, and study to ascertain what man is, what is his composition, what is the human will, how it is acted on, how it operates, and what is man's character, disposition and life. *Life* interprets the Bible, if one only knows how to study it. The everlasting round of human nature and human experience throws light upon the words and the passages of Scripture.

We are not, therefore, to take our interpretation of the Bible, and go out and refuse to see things as they are, and cramp life, and attempt to compress it into the space which that interpretation covers; but we are to give to truths in respect to men the same freedom that we give to truths with regard to lower physical things. And we are to find them out by going to nature, and by appropriate and judicious processes of study ascertaining what they are. Life itself is the best commentary on the Bible.

So, then, whatever you find to be true outside of the Bible, may measure, may interpret to you, that which is contained in the Bible. If you do not find that to be true in one which you find to be true in the other; if disagreements between the Bible and nature arise, they come from a wrong interpretation of the one, or of the other, or of both. And the history of the matter is this: that from the beginning, men, though they have interpreted the Bible according to their best light, have often interpreted it wrongly, until a better knowledge of the external world enabled them to take a better view.

When men found out that the earth moved around the sun, when the whole Copernican system was disclosed, there was a great uproar in the Christian world because the new astronomy would destroy the Bible. But after a while, either these revelations, or men's constructions of the Bible, gave way; and I need not tell you which gave way. When Rome made Galileo recant, she did not blot out the truth which he had brought to light.

We remember that when geological discoveries came in men were in alarm, and said, "What is to become of the first chapters of Genesis? Has the earth been created through such long periods of time as the depositions of rock and soil indicate? Why, the Bible says that on the first day God made so and so, and that on the second day he made so and so." They had the whole order of creation arranged like a case of drawers; and they could pull out one, and another, and another, with perfect regularity and precision. And when these disclosures of science began to be made, there was a great turmoil on the subject. But after a while men concluded that they would call "days," periods of time. And a day might be a thousand years, or a hundred thousand, or five hundred thousand. And they said, "Well, the Bible does not undertake to teach the science of geology at all. In Genesis, we find the order of creation stated; and that is in accordance with modern geological teachings; but as to 'days,' they were indefinite periods of time." And so biblical construction gave way, and not the revelations of God in science.

More recently, there has come up a school of men who are alarming proper-minded and sedate people in respect to the origin of man. We are finding out who our forefathers were. Lineage, you know, has always been a great thing in this world. Men have been eager to trace their ancestry. But there is a point where I think we shall all be willing to stop. There is a theory of the origin of man which it is not very agreeable to contemplate, and from which we naturally shrink. But if a thing be true outside of the Bible, you may depend upon it that it will show itself in spite of you. What God writes with the hand that made creation, he writes so that men

cannot rub it out. When once a seed has unfolded itself, you cannot throw back the blossom or the fruit to the condition from which it came. And when rocks and creatures have risen up and testified as to God's creative method, you cannot put back into its germ-state the witness which they bear.

You must make your interpretation of Scripture conform to the revelation of God in nature. I do not believe that they contradict each other. I believe that all the truths which are recognized in the Scriptures will be found to be susceptible of interpretations that are coincident with the essential facts of nature. And scientific disclosures, although they are at first disturbing, I believe to be the best commentators and the best illuminators of the truths of the Bible which God has ever sent into the world. Men, using their light in any age, construct, according to the spirit of that age, and according to their limited powers, fallible interpretations of the great scheme of truth which is contained in the Bible. Nature, as she unfolds more and more, makes commentaries upon those interpretations; and the commentaries stand. I think that by and by, when the disclosures that are being made of what is called the scheme of Evolution have come to their growth, so that we may know exactly what they are—I think that then one of the most striking things which ever came to pass, will be the admirable analogy with the great facts of nature and science which will be found in the Word of God. For, although there is much yet to be made known, it seems to me that all thinking men who have taken the trouble to inform themselves about these facts, believe in the theory of evolution, or the theory that the method by which God created the world and the races, consists in the development, the unfolding, of everything from some anterior and less perfect state. He would be a bold man, and, as I must think, a rash one, who would, at this stage of investigation, dogmatize on the subject of the Origin of Man. Although many of the later applications of the theory of Development require ripening, yet they foreshadow, I think, if not the very truth, yet the *direction* in which the truth lies. And we may as well prepare ourselves to accept it. For one, I am ready.

Let us, in this spirit, look, for one single moment, at the general drift of the Scripture-teaching by the side of the revelations which have been made, or are making, by science.

1. **As to the condition of mankind.** I recollect very well when the doctrine of total depravity, as founded in the essential animal condition of the race, excited great repugnance and horror among men who, as the result of hereditary endowments and long culture, had

come to a condition in which they felt more the impulse of the intellectual and spiritual than they did of the basilar and the animal. They felt it to be a very great reproach to say that men were depraved and wicked from the root, and always. But the Word of God still went on declaring, if it declared anything, that at the bottom there was an animal nature, fierce, intractable, unspiritual, without God, and without moral restraint. That has been the testimony of ages. And what is science now revealing? What if all the theories of Mr. Darwin, or half of them, shall be found true, will it not ratify the steadfast testimony of the whole Word of God as respects the essentially animal, secular, worldly nature of man? The Word of God has always borne this witness: that unless something sprouted out of the lower constitution and nature of man, and unfolded into a higher spiritual realm, true manhood would not be attained. And is it not the tenor of the theories and disclosures which are now occupying so much of the world's attention, that we spring from lower forms; that we go steadily up and up, higher and higher; that we are gradually unfolding; and that our true nature is not to be found in our far-back nature, but in our far-forward nature? Does not the Word of God bear witness, all the way through, to the essential availability and educability of man? Does it not teach that you can develop him out of lower forms into higher ones, and out of the natural state into the spiritual, saying that they who sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; that they who sow to the animal shall be animal; that they who sow to the passions and appetites shall have the misfortunes and sufferings which these forces of their nature yield, and that, on the other hand, they who sow to the Spirit shall inherit those blessings which come from the Spirit?

2. Consider what is the direction in which perfection lies. Is not nature bearing witness to the essential power of the reason, and to the real superiority of the moral constitution of man? Is there any difference in schools on that subject? Is not that the part of man which characterizes him, and distinguishes him from all the races below him? And is it not true that the progress of man has been made in that direction? Is there anything more clearly set forth than that, in the Word of God, from the earliest record to the latest? And has not that line of development and growth in Scripture been pointed out plainly and accurately by the pen of science?—only Scripture makes many statements that transcend anything which has yet been found out by science. For science, so far, has not attempted to show, or has not succeeded in showing, any connection between the thought and soul of man, and the inspiring power of the divine mind. I believe that by and by it will be demonstrated,

not only that there belongs to man a moral character and destiny, but that there is a divine power which meets him on his way up; and that it is by the stimulating and enlightening and renovating power of the divine mind that man is escaping from his animal condition, and working his way up to the higher state for which he is destined.

3. The Scriptures go still further, and teach that man will one day slough off the animal entirely, and leave that seed-form out of which he sprouted, and take on the blossom-form; or, that he will evolve a nature higher; and that the spirits of just men made perfect will live together. Is not this just the progress that we should expect, in close analogy with the scientific disclosures which have been made in regard to the development of mankind?

That is true, then, which I stated in the beginning, that the essential truths of Christianity will be found not merely in Scripture, but outside of it; and that they are not true because they are written there, that they are not true because the Bible says they are; but that they are contained in the Bible because they are true, and were true, before they were recorded.

And that is how it comes to pass that this old Book, in which are gathered through thousands of years, the experiences of men who stated the truth as it was made known to them in the several ages to which they belonged,—that this old Book, when in these later days, it is tried by the latest discoveries of scientific research, while the externals of it—what may be called the husk and shell—may be here and there peeled off, is in its great truths found to be coincident with these latest discoveries.

If this general view be authenticated by a further examination, I think that we may dismiss all fear, that we may pray for light and development, and that we may hail those honest and earnest investigators for the truth who are seeking to make known to men, from the disclosures of God's creation, what are the footsteps, what is the handiwork, what are the thoughts, and what are the methods of God in the history of the world.

I am sorry to have any antagonism between science and religion. I am sorry that scientific men should think it necessary to antagonize religion from their side; and still more do I grieve that Christian men should, from church reasons, think it necessary to antagonize science. I believe that both sides are working toward the same results, and that we ought to seek to keep peace between them. We can accept the deductions of science, and still maintain truth in regard to the destiny of mankind, and the regeneration of

the souls of men, through the influence of the Divine Spirit, with the co-operation of the human will.

More than that, those persons do not seem to me to be wise who, from any reason whatever—from the revulsion of disgust, or from perverse teachings, or from weariness, or from reaction of any kind—are disposed to throw the Bible aside, saying, “It was good enough for old times, but it does not answer for our day.” We cannot afford to throw away the word of God. Many people say, “We have come to new times; we have come to a new inspiration, a new dispensation of truth is ushered in; and away with the old Bible!” Well, when we get the new light; when spiritualism has got its work all done; when there have been told us things deeper, things higher, things broader, things more cogent and more satisfying than those which are recorded in the simple and sublime sentences of the word of God, then it will be time enough to consider what is to be done with our father’s Bible. I do not propose to throw it away merely on the *promise* of something better. I do not propose to throw it away simply on the pretention of something that claims to be superior to it. I do not expect ever to throw it away. A thousand years hence the Psalms of David and the words of Christ will be as fresh and fruitful as now.

I know there is that in the Scriptures which has grit to it. I know it by this token: not that wise men have written so much, but that here is a book which has gone through tempestuous ages, assailed, buffeted, cast hither and thither, and yet has retained the confidence of mankind because it has that in it which masters sorrow, takes hold of trouble, gives strength where there is weakness, and supplies an anchor to those who are tempest-tossed. There is that in the word of God which has held the world through troublous periods, which has kept men steadfast in the midst of trials and adversities, which supports the poor and the ignorant, taking hold of the fundamental wants of human nature with a power which no other literature and no other thing ever did.

Now, so long as it is full of breasts of consolation, let those who are in trouble nurse at it. If there is any better humanity, if there is any higher morality, if there is any deeper love, if there is any more potent disinterestedness, than the Bible reveals, I would like to know it. If anywhere there be a literature of the two worlds—of the present, and of the hereafter—that transcends that which is contained in the Bible, show it to me. I want the best and truest thing. But it seems to me that those who make haste to throw away their Bible, are throwing away their best good. It seems to me that those who leave their Bible unsounded, who leave its depths

unsearched, do not understand where their greatest treasure lies. And as to those impudent persons, those little specimens of men, who would kick their Bible overboard, because they have found out, by reading in the corner of some newspaper, that the Scriptures are not true—I need not waste words on such bubbles, that break if you touch them.

“ Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit ? there is more hope of a fool than of him.”

What sort of a man is that of whom it may be said that a fool is more advantageous to the world than he is ? And yet, how many men, how many little whipsters, there are, who never read a book of Scripture in their life, who never took the Bible according to its plan, as bread to satisfy hunger, water to quench thirst, using it as a staff to hold up their weight when they were weak, and using it as a medicine for their soul when it was sick—how many such persons there are, that in their blindness and presumption reject this blessed repository of that which the human heart most needs !

The Bible is never so true to me as when I am in trouble ; it is never so true to me as when I am conscious of my weakness, and of the unsatisfying nature of everything that there is in this world. And hundreds of persons learn when brought into trouble to esteem it and lean upon it, who have despised it and thrown contempt upon it. Many a man who has cursed it has gone home from the burial of his companion, or the entombing of his child, disconsolate, and taken up his mother’s old Book, and dropped silent tears as he read then for the first time, with an understanding heart, its comforting messages. There is some mysterious emanation or power that finds its way to the soul in reading the Scriptures under such circumstances ; and how ill can any man afford to reject that which is such a balm in his sorest need !

Suppose you were to have an insurrection against doctors ? Suppose, one by one, you should throw them out of the community ? Suppose you should do the work so thoroughly that there should not be a shred left of these despotic men going round and telling people that they must take this, that, or the other hateful drug ? Suppose you should not only send these men away, but burn their books and their medicine ? When the doctors were gone and the apothecary shops with all their contents were destroyed, and there was nothing left but neuralgia, and rheumatisms, and dropsies, and fevers, would you be any better off than you are now ?

Here is God’s medicine-book, full of wondrous remedies, full of blessed compounds, for the cure of the diseases of the human soul,

and you would get rid of it ; you would throw it away ; you would destroy it. But do you thus take away depravity ? Do you cure unbelief ? Do you remove the animal that is in you—the tiger, the bear, the monkey, the serpent, whose nature and spots appear here and there. Do you turn out all this cage full of unclean beasts that are in the heart, when you cast the Bible from you ? Oh no, you only turn out their keepers. These that have had the power of restraining and controlling the fierce animals that ramp and rage within you, you put out of the way ; but the animals themselves remain to torment you still ? You have given up the Bible ; but the evils which it was sent to cure—the crying need, the down-sagging trouble, the yearning aspiration, the lifting up of the soul when touched by the divine light and influence—where is your solution and your help for these ?

In the word of God we have what we need. Ten thousand times ten thousand trusting souls have followed its directions, and found them to be true, and rejoiced in them. The drunkard has been led to give up his cup by the influence which has been brought to bear upon him through the Bible. The Bible has been instrumental in reclaiming the thief. Lusts have been cured by it. Strong worldly ambitions have been overcome by it. Pride has been softened by it. It has clothed the hard and rugged sides of life with blossoming vines of beauty. And the world to-day is a witness of the power of the word of God. We see on every hand evidences of its ability to comfort and console and bless. Oh, how many are dying and have died in the faith of the word of God !

And how full of blessed associations this dear Book is !

I walked through the old streets of London, where every other house has a history such that one might well pause before it, and ponder for hours. I walked along the fields where many a grand scene had been enacted. At Winchester I visited the old cathedral. I went through it. I would live in it a month if I could. The wide interior was filled with unimagined beauty and glory. That cathedral was built in successive ages ; so that every part of the architecture, by the harmony of the varied materials of which it was composed, fitly represented how all forms of religious thought may be harmonized in one great community of the true Christian Church. I saw the tombs of the old kings. Greater than they were the three great architects who had constructed this mighty cathedral. It was a museum of antiquity. It was full of life. I trembled with sensibility. And the impression will never die out of my mind.

But what is that cathedral compared with this silent cathedral, the Bible, in whose aisles have sounded the footsteps, not only of

kings and emperors, but, from generation to generation, the footsteps of the little child, and the mother and father of the household; and the footsteps of multitudes upon multitudes of worthies of the church, all the way back, a hundred years, five hundred years, ten hundred years, fifteen hundred years; and the footsteps of uncounted heroes who have gone up to heaven consoled and enlightened by the pages of the word of God?

How venerable is this Book! How full of precious memories is it! How does it not only teach us the way of life, but group about itself the most significant features of modern history! And are we, with the sciolist's ignorance, with unvenerating contempt, with ill-omened presumption, to ostracize the Bible, to expunge its truths, to drive it out of our library, and to live without its light?

My young friends, do not be over-zealous to catch up the latest things. Do not abandon the faith of your fathers on the strength of the popular representations which men make in regard to what is true and what is false. I read as well as you do. I think I am as honest as you are. I shall take the truth, wherever it leads me. This has been my determination thus far. And having been now for more than forty years an ardent follower of truths as they have been revealed by science in respect to the human mind, and in respect to all the great elements of social life, I have changed, in many regards, my interpretation of the word of God, but not my faith in the Bible. And I believe it far more firmly now than I ever did before. To me science is a ratifier of the truths of the Bible. And I find them substantiated by the latest discoveries of science. I do not see any more than any others; but I think I foresee, nebulously, that there is going to arise a Christian era when the claims of the Bible will seem more reasonable; when its power, when its great elemental forces, cleansed from much of superstition and much of ecclesiasticism, will have an authority which they are not permitted to have now.

Hold fast, then,—not to forms and ceremonies (which are mutable things; which are optional; which are to be used if they benefit you, and which are not to be used if they do not benefit you); but to the great essential truths of human character, and human necessity, and divine interposition; to the great outlines of destiny and duty; to the guide as to the way in which you are to live, as to the part of your nature which you are to cultivate; to the directions in respect to reason, and moral sense, and faith, and hope, and, above all—luminously above all, as the beginning and the ending, the fulfillment of the law—to the blessed commands in respect to *love*.

Cast not away your faith in these sublime teachings of the word

of God. I exhort you not only not to cast them away, but to verify their truth in yourselves. Be wise unto salvation ; for ere long the mists will gather about your eyes. Ere long will come that day when you shall hang between the hither and the thither spheres, and this world will die out of your sight, and its sounds will no longer impress themselves on your ear. And it is of vital importance that you should have that aim, that inspiration, that attraction, that shall lead you away from the clod, from the animal, that shall bring you into the spirit-world, and make you a child of glory forever and forever.

Whatever you lose, do not lose heaven. Whatever you give up, give not up your God. And then he will never leave you nor forsake you ; and you shall stand in Zion and before Him.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou holy and blessed God! vouchsafe to us a sense of thy presence. And as we cannot rise to thee, nor help ourselves by our senses, grant unto us that divine influence by which the knowledge of God is imparted to us. Awaken in us the hidden and spiritual life. May we feel in the soul the pressure of the divine hand—the presence of the divine heart. May joy be breathed upon us by thy Spirit. May we find peace diffused from thee. May we be able to dismiss all thoughts that harass; all doubts that cloud; all sorrows that grieve. May we be able to come into thy presence rejoicing. And as little children trust their parents, so may we trust thee. May our hearts lean upon thine. Oh, that we might know thy will more perfectly! Oh, that we might be delivered from the thrall of error, and from everything which misleads! Oh, that we might know, with the simplicity of truth itself, what is the law respecting ourselves! Oh, that we might have insight into thy word; that we might know how to detect its truths; that we might know how to interpret them into our life, so that they shall become the habits of our soul! Oh! that we might have that poverty of spirit which shall bring a true humility! Oh, that we might have that purity of heart through which we shall see God! Oh, that we might have that disposition which shall make us the children of God!

We long for all those accomplishments of the soul which shall bring us into intimate relationship and holy concourse with the justified spirits in thy heavenly kingdom. We do not deprecate thine earth, though thou thyself hast laid it aside. It is not to escape pain and punishment that we strive. We know that between us and utter jeopardy thou dost stand with infinite mercy. We leave to thee the knowledge of the unknown. We leave to thee those great influences which man does not discern and cannot comprehend. We desire to be brought into the knowledge of God, even though we do not understand him; and into the knowledge of our life, though all thy government and thy paths through the universe are not yet known to us. Give us this believing heart; this trusting spirit; this loving nature; this obedient disposition.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt remember all who are seeking to help themselves. And if any are discouraged, if any feel that the way is too great, or that the path is too narrow and too steep, grant them hope; and may they by hope be kept from going back again and betaking themselves to unworthy ideals of life. May none be weary in well-doing.

If there be any that are shaken in their faith, from the grounds of their fathers, and from their own inheritance of belief, and are perplexed and distressed in mind, and wrestle with questions which will not be settled, and which they cannot manage, Lord, we pray that thou, who didst come to thy disciples when they were tossed upon the sea in a great storm, and in the night, and didst still the waves, and bring calm and peace, wilt appear to them. Wilt thou draw near to all that are thus shaken; to all that are tempest-tossed and not comforted. If there be those who are seeking to restrain mighty and powerful inward dispositions, knowing what is right, and striving for right things, and yet with constant discouragement, their purposes dashed down by the impetuous strength of their lower nature, O Lord! art thou not on their side? Wilt thou not be patient with them? Wilt thou not accept their desire, and help them to desire even more, and to more utterly strive? And may they be willing, as it were, to pluck off the right hand, to pluck out the right eye, and to die rather than yield. Help them, for great is their need of help.

Oh, how mighty is pride! Oh, how strong is avarice! Oh, how insatia-

ble is the lust of praise ! Oh, how imperious are the appetites and the passions of our nature ! Lord, thou knowest altogether what we are. For such thou didst come forth. For such thou didst suffer and die. And now, in the struggle which is begun in men, wilt thou forsake them ? Wilt thou not give them thy Spirit to help them in every time of need, and with every temptation open the door of escape ? Grant that there may be a believing and faith-bearing life in every one of them.

We pray that thou wilt be with those who have escaped from the snare, and who are seeking with might and main to flee beyond the reach of the arrows of temptation. Speed them, and put thy shield above them, and deliver them from their adversary.

We pray, O Lord ! if there be those who are weak, and who lift not up so much as their eyes to heaven, but beat upon their breast, and say, God be merciful to us, sinners, that thou wilt be more than merciful to them. Meet them, though they are yet afar off. Throw thine arms about them. Call them thine own, and bring them, wondering and amazed at thy clemency, back into obedience and into love.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt be with those who have come late in life into the way of piety, and who, having long incarnated sin in their dispositions and lives, are seeking now to throw it out again. O Lord ! we pray that their faith may not fail them. We pray that they may now serve thee with all the eagerness and energy and whole-heartedness with which they have served the world, the flesh, and the devil. Make them happy illustrations of thy grace ; may evil and abandoned men take courage by them, and know that there is a way by which they may be restored to Jesus, and to spiritual life, and to truth, and to honor, and to safety, and to everlasting glory.

We pray that thou wilt revive thy work in the hearts of those that have grown cold, and in the hearts of all that have fallen away from their faith.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt excite inquiry and anxiety in the hearts of those that are without thee, and that are careless, and that are sporting with things that are of eternal interest.

We implore that thy kingdom may come in this congregation. May all those that are laboring in word or doctrine be greatly comforted, and greatly inspired by thy spirit ; and may they spread thy truth everywhere.

Build up thy Churches. May thy cause prevail, and all this land be filled with the power of thy truth, and the nations of the earth see the light of thy coming. May the new heaven and the new earth, in which dwells righteousness, appear, and may the Lord reign in all the world.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee to bless the word of truth which has been spoken to-night. We pray that we may be wise, and give heed to the truth as it is in us, and as it is in the world around about us. We thank thee for that truth which has forerun and outrun science. We thank thee that now thou art stirring up so many to search the foundations of the earth, and discover the secrets of its structure ; and that the light coming thence is light bearing consolation. We thank thee for all that the truth of thy word has done and for what it is doing. We thank thee for what it has been

in the family. We thank thee that it has been an inspiration for liberty, and for all that is right and just among men. We pray that thy truth may have free course to run and be glorified. And may all that which is pure, and which has power in the human soul, be extended throughout the earth.

Wilt thou hear us in these our petitions, and accept of us, for Christ Jesus' sake. *Amen.*

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